

Mine Would Be You by CatsBalletHarveySpecter

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Summary: What if Hopper got to take Joyce on that date? Enzo's, 7 o'clock, he picks her up.

Mine Would Be You

SEASON 3 SPOILERS AHEAD

heartbroken & hopeful that Hopper is somewhere in the upside-down, I bring you this alternate ending for season 3 in which Hopper and Joyce get yo go on that date.

David Harbour, if you're reading this, thank you for the cinematic masterpiece that is season 3, even though it shattered my little Jopper heart.

This is a three part story that popped in to my head earlier today that I just had to put in to words! I don't write for Stranger Things often, but watching (and re-watching) season 3 has me inspired. I hope you enjoy xx

After tossing the obnoxiously large Russian man into the machine, Hopper sprints back to the control room where he finds Joyce attempting to reach both keys using her belt.

"On three" he yells, as he scrambles into the room and runs towards the second key.

"Three...Two...One"

They both turn their respective keys and duck away as the entire contraption before them explodes with a bright flash. Scrambling to get up he hears footsteps and begins to panic, looking for her. He grabs her hand as the doors on the other side of the room fling open and tugs her towards the exit, "We gotta go!" he yells, still holding her hand as they barrel down the hallway. Murray joins them as they make their way back towards the entrance but Joyce refuses to release Jim's hand, she almost lost him back there, there was no way she was letting him go now.

They reach the entrance of the vent duct as the American soldiers breach the fortress and put their hands up indicating they are not the

enemy. They ride to the surface with a handful of American soldiers surrounding them, Joyce glued to Jim's side, their fingers still intertwined.

"What the hell happened back there?" Murray asks, breaking the silence.

"Nothing, just a close call" Hopper answers, squeezing Joyce's hand and flashing her a knowing look. He almost lost her back there and he knew now that he would have rather died than lose her, she was everything to him.

Once they reach the surface they are immediately tossed into a sea of chaos, soldiers and emergency vehicles surround the mall which is now in shambles and they both look around frantically for their kids.

Will is the first to spot them, his mom's hand in the chiefs not going un-noticed as he tosses the blanket off of his shoulders and sprints towards her. She reluctantly releases Hopper's hand and takes Will in her arms, both shaking through their tears as she strokes his head and repeatedly tells him everything is alright. Eleven spots Hopper shortly after and begins to hobble over to him. He meets her halfway and she collapses into his arms with a sob.

"I thought... I thought... Gone" she whimpers into his arms.

"I would never leave you kiddo" he kisses the top of her head and pats her back as her tears soak his blood-stained shirt.

After a series of tear-filled reunions, the kids catch Hopper and Joyce up on everything that happened while they were underground, including the destruction of Hopper's cabin by that *thing*. Joyce offers to let Hopper and Eleven stay with them until the cabin can be repaired and despite his initial protests, Hopper eventually caves in and agrees to the arrangement. Nancy and Jonathan drive the rest of the kids home before returning to take Hopper and Eleven to the remains of their home to gather a few of their things before driving them to the Byers. Joyce and Will take a ride from Dr. Owens so they can tidy up and help make Hopper and Eleven feel more comfortable during their stay.

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Standing in the ruins of his former home, Hopper looks around at the wreckage and his heart aches for everything his adopted daughter had to go through. He knew she was a fighter, but he hated to see her have to expend herself so much. He hated how broken she looked as she gathers a few items of clothing and stuffed them into a duffel bag, powerless.

"It's going to be alright kiddo, they'll come back" he reassures her as they stand in the middle of the living room of their former home.

"What if they're gone?" she whispers.

"We'll figure it out, just like we always do" he pulls her in for a bear hug.

"Are you sure you're okay with staying at the Byer's?" he asks as they make their way back to where the car is waiting.

"Yes. Are you sure?" she replies.

"Why wouldn't I be sure?" he eyes her as she tosses her bag into the trunk.

"Because you have to tell her" Eleven says before hopping into the back seat beside Jonathan.

"Tell who, what?" he asks, getting into the passenger seat next to Nancy.

"Joyce, that you love her" Eleven states simply before turning her attention out the window.

The colour drains from Hopper's face at his daughter's words and he turns to look at Jonathan who is grinning back at him with a knowing smile. No one says a word for the rest of the ride to the Byer's house, the kids all exhausted and Hopper lost in thought; he should tell her, besides she was the one who asked him on a date.

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Tidying up the living room Will studies his mom as she cleans. She looked smaller somehow, more fragile. He supposes after everything she'd gone through, it made sense, but she was a warrior and he knew that she would be okay, that they would all be okay.

"How are you doing baby?" she asks, plopping herself down beside him on the couch.

"I feel like I should be asking you that" he chuckles quietly, "What happened down there?"

"All that matters is that we closed the gate and that *thing* is never coming back" she smiles, wrapping an arm around his shoulder and pulling him into her side.

"And you and Hopper?" Will looks up at her wide-eyed.

"What about me and Hopper?"

"Nothing" he sighs and makes his way towards his bedroom.

"Hey mom" he calls back over his shoulder.

"Ya, baby?"

"You deserve to be happy too" he smiles before turning towards his room, leaving her alone with her thoughts. She asked Hop on a date, and he said yes. The reality of it all was starting to hit her; they were going on a date. That thing that two people who have feelings for each other do. After all this time, Jim fucking Hopper was interested in a hot mess like her. This past week had been a whirlwind of emotion for her and spending time with Hopper only confirmed what she'd known since Will went missing years ago; she was in love with Jim Hopper. She may have acted shocked by Murrays accusations, but she knew every word he was saying was true. She had sexual feelings for Jim, she just wasn't sure they were reciprocated. That is, until she told him their dinner was to be a date and she watched a tongue-tied Jim Hopper and realized perhaps Murray was right about

his feelings too.

Now here they were, nothing standing in the way of them being together. No multi-dimensional monsters or ghosts of their pasts. What if it was a mistake? Jim was the only true constant in her life besides the boys and she couldn't stand the thought of losing him. What if they were making a mistake and were better off as friends? What if she wasn't enough for him?

A knock at the door interrupts her thoughts and she opens it to let Hopper, Eleven, Jonathan and Nancy in.

"You sure this is okay?" Hopper grunts, dropping their bags on the floor.

"You two are always welcome here" she smiles, helping Eleven take her bag to Will's room.

With Nancy and Jonathan off listening to music in Jonathan's room, and El and Will already fast asleep in Will's room, Hopper helps himself to a beer and offers a second bottle to Joyce before taking a seat across from her at the kitchen table.

"You think that it's really over? That that *thing* is finally gone?" she says breaking the silence.

"I sure as hell hope so because I don't think any of us need another night like tonight" he sighs, taking a swig of his beer.

"Those poor kids, they've been through so much" she sighs and copies his action, taking a sip of her beer.

"So have you" he looks over at her.

"Nothing I can't handle" she allows her eyes to lock on his for a moment before flicking down towards the table.

"I don't doubt that, you're the strongest women I know, detective Byers" he smirks slightly.

"Does that mean I got the job?" she smirks back.

"If it would make you stay" he says, stare fixated on her as she fiddles with her hair and keeps her gaze fixed on the table.

"Hop" she sighs, not knowing how else to respond.

"Don't leave" he pleads, getting up and kneeling between her legs, taking her hands in his own and forcing her to look at him, "Don't leave me"

"Hop" she whispers, a single tear rolling down her cheek as she looks to where their fingers are entangled.

"At least think about it, okay?" he begs.

"Okay" she nods, and he uses his thumb to wipe away her tear.

Her phone rings, interrupting their moment and he moves to answer it with a gruff, aggressive hello. After a few mumbled yes's he hangs up and turns back to her,

"Dr. Owens wants me to go in and see him" he reaches for his jacket and begins to make his way to the door.

"Now?" she trails after him.

"Now"

"I'm coming with you" she says in her typical determined tone.

"No, you're not" he objects.

"Yes, I am" she crosses her arms over her chest.

"Someone has to stay here with the kids" he points out.

"Jonathan and Nancy can watch them" she argues back and reaches for her jacket.

"You can't come Joyce!" he exclaims.

"Why not?!" she screams back.

"Because I can't stand the idea of losing you!" he calls back and the

room suddenly falls eerily silent.

"Did you ever think that's why I want to come? Because I can't lose you, not again like I thought...back there..." her scream is cut short by his lips crashing down on hers, his hands cupping both sides of her face as he pulls her closer to him. Bending down he scoops her up without breaking their kiss and walks her back towards the wall, their hands greedily roaming each other's bodies as their kisses become frantic and messy. She wraps her legs around his waist as her back comes up against the wall with a thud, her hands running up and down his chest. He slips his tongue past hers and she whimpers at the contact, hands desperately pulling him as close as the layers of clothing between them will allow.

"You're not going to lose me Joyce..." he whispers, still holding her against the wall.

"You don't know that" she mumbles

"Besides, I know we might be under the same roof, but I haven't forgotten that I'm picking you up at 7 on Friday" he says, a small smirk spreading across his face.

"What if we're making a mistake?" she whispers, unable to keep her insecurities and fears to herself any longer.

"Does this feel like a mistake to you?" he grins, bending down to give her a kiss that leaves her breathless.

As their kisses grow deeper, the urge to remove the layers of clothing between them intensifies and Hopper carries Joyce towards her bedroom, bumping into several walls and the table as he maneuvers them through the house, but managing not to break their kiss in doing so. Finally managing to reach Joyce's room he fumbles with the doorknob while she kisses his neck. He carries her straight towards the bed and drops her down on her back, crawling on top of her while tossing his shirt over his head. He helps her remove her top and bra and leans back to appreciate just how incredible she is. Joyce Byers was his fucking kryptonite. She was resilient, brave and absolutely gorgeous. Sure, Joyce had always been pretty, in high school he often caught himself staring, but two kids and a lifetime of

turmoil later, she reminded as beautiful as ever in Jim's eyes.

"You're staring she comments, watching as his eyes take in her semi-naked body.

"I'm appreciating" he states before leaning forward and taking one of her breasts in his mouth.

"God, Hop" she moans at the contact. Murray was right, she'd wanted this, wanted him for as long as she could remember. But she didn't just want him this way, she wanted all of him, the good, the bad and the ugly. She knew now, after their conversation in the hall, that he wanted the same things, he didn't want to lose her and suddenly the idea of them being together didn't seem so scary, it just seemed right.

He takes his time pleasuring her, watching in delight as she whimpers his name. He'd pictured this moment more than he cared to admit and nothing he conjured up ever came close to how it felt having her in his arms. Three hours ago, he was terrified he was about to lose everything, and now here he was, holding her in his arms. Eleven was safe, the gate was closed, and he got to take Joyce Byers on a date. Scratch that, he got to be with Joyce Byers, and he was going to cherish every minute of it.